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NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT
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Item 2 of the provisional agenda*

PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS

Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

1. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) is a unique attempt of the nations of the world to find a common basis for action to protect the future of planet Earth and to secure for all its inhabitants a more sustainable and more equitable future. The goals of the Conference have been articulated in General Assembly resolution 44/228. The task before the Preparatory Committee is to recommend the programmes and the actions required to reach these goals. At its first session, the Preparatory Committee provided a valuable indication of the primary areas of concern and requested a number of studies and reports in respect of them. The second session must continue this development and identify in practical terms the measures that need to be taken by the global community to address these concerns. The work of the secretariat has been guided by this need to develop a wide range of practical steps within the framework of a coherent and concerted programme of action, Agenda 21. The present report seeks to describe the work process of the secretariat and certain related organizational issues. It also presents an overview of the very voluminous documentation that has been placed before the Preparatory Committee for its consideration.

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I. ACTIVITIES OF THE CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT

A. Work process

2. The agenda for the 1992 Conference is very wide-ranging and at its first meeting held in Nairobi the Preparatory Committee provided invaluable direction to the secretariat in organizing its work programme. A cooperative work process has been established which allows the secretariat to mobilize the best available expertise in the United Nations system and elsewhere in order to provide the analytical background and develop proposals for action for consideration by the Preparatory Committee. This is being done mainly through a series of working parties that have been set up with members drawn from relevant United Nations agencies, specialized research institutions and individual experts. Particular care has been taken to ensure that experts and institutions from developing countries are well represented in the working parties. Working parties have been set up to deal with:

(a) Atmosphere issues, including climate change;

(b) Land and agriculture;

(c) Forests;

(d) Biodiversity;

(e) Biotechnology;

(f) Oceans;

(g) Toxic chemicals and hazardous wastes;

(h) Environmental education.

In addition to the working parties, the secretariat has also convened ad hoc meetings of experts from United Nations agencies and elsewhere to discuss specific issues, particularly poverty related issues, environment and development and cross-sectoral issues.

3. The United Nations agencies are participating in the work of the secretariat mainly through the working parties, which have contributed in a very substantial way to the documentation that is placed before the Preparatory Committee at its second session. They have devoted significant resources to providing technical and analytical support to the work of the UNCED secretariat. The secretariat is deeply grateful for the excellent cooperation that it is receiving from all parts of the United Nations system as well as from the other organizations and individuals who are contributing to the work of the secretariat.

4. The 1992 Conference is a conference on both environment and development and at its first session the Preparatory Committee stressed the need to ensure that in all areas of work the developmental dimension is taken fully into account. Each working party has been asked especially to do this, to pay particular attention to

the linkages with developmental issues and problems and to identify the need for financial support, technology transfer and institutional development. In addition, the secretariat has undertaken substantial work on the developmental dimensions of the overall environmental issue.

5. The decision 1/25 on environment and development, adopted by the Preparatory Committee at its first session held in Nairobi, 1/ provides the basis for a major work programme. As part of this process the secretariat called a meeting of experts from United Nations agencies and from other organizations to examine the issues of poverty, environment and development. A preliminary paper based on these consultations is one of the documents for consideration at the second session of the Preparatory Committee. A significant amount of work has already been initiated in the form of papers commissioned from leading research institutions and scholars. On the basis of these inputs, and the inputs expected from the parallel activities in other parts of the United Nations system, the secretariat plans to develop further its work on sustainable development.

6. In all of its work the secretariat places special emphasis on cooperating closely with the relevant agencies, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to ensure that full advantage is taken of their various activities and capacities on matters that are directly relevant to the agenda for the 1992 Conference. Specific references to these parallel activities and the way in which they will contribute to the deliberations of the Preparatory Committee are given in the relevant documents.

B. Regional activities

7. The regional commissions of the United Nations system are also fully involved in preparatory work for the Conference and some important subregional activities have been initiated.

1. Economic Commission for Africa

8. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has appointed an interdisciplinary task force. ECA has also developed a proposal for four preparatory meetings at the subregional level to be held in Eastern and Southern Africa, West Africa, Central Africa and North Africa. The regional meeting at the ministerial level is scheduled for April 1991.

9. A subregional proposal from the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) region is also under preparation and similarly the Sahelian countries are being assisted by the United Nations Sahelian Office.

2. Economic Commission for Europe

10. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) is following up on the Bergen Conference and is developing a number of regional environment-related agreements and projects. The environmental problems of Eastern and central Europe are of

particular concern because of their impact not only on national but also on regional and global environment conditions. At the same time, in particular in the energy field, there are great opportunities for improvements. ECE is specifically for this reason working on energy conservation under the "Energy efficiency 2000 project".

3. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

11. The regional meeting at the ministerial level was held at Bangkok from 10 to 16 October 1990 as a follow-up to the World Commission on Environment and Development. The ministerial meeting, in its declaration on environmentally sound and sustainable development (ESSD) requested ESCAP to arrange a subsequent meeting to finalize a detailed regional strategy for UNCED. The follow-up meeting will be held from 13 to 19 February 1991 at Bangkok. Any strategy document that the February meeting might agree on will be further considered by ESCAP at its forty-seventh session in Seoul from 1 to 10 April 1991. Subregional activities in the Pacific are being supported by the Asian Development Bank (AsDB) and the field offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the region.

4. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

12. In the Latin America and the Caribbean region, the preparatory conference is scheduled for 4 to 7 March in Mexico City, in time to report in detail on the outcome of the regional preparations at the March session of the Preparatory Committee. Earlier regional activities include the ministerial meeting on the environment organized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago from 17 to 23 October 1990, which adopted an action plan; and the report entitled "Our own agenda", sponsored by UNDP and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) with the collaboration of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and UNEP. Subregional activities in the Caribbean are being supported in part by UNDP.

5. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

13. The regional conference is scheduled to be held from 13 to 16 May at Cairo. The conference will be sponsored jointly by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and UNDP. The topics of the conference will be based on national reports as well as select case and sectoral studies. It is expected that the conference will discuss and approve an Arab declaration on environment.

C. National preparation and reports

14. The suggested guidelines approved by the Preparatory Committee in August at Nairobi were transmitted to member States in September and October. As of late January more than 100 countries have received the guidelines and over 70 have indicated that the process of preparing national reports has begun. Several

requests for funding have been received directly or through UNDP and are being reviewed jointly with UNDP and other funding sources.

15. The UNDP resident representatives/resident co-ordinators are also UNCED representatives in the field and their contribution to the process will be vital as the preparatory work accelerates. They are being backstopped by the UNCED secretariat and by UNDP headquarters. UNCED has also contacted all United Nations agencies, including the World Bank, regional development banks, bilateral development assistance agencies, as well as the World Resources Institute and some international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), many of which have indicated their willingness to assist developing countries desiring assistance in preparing their national reports. The regional commissions are also actively involved in developing regional strategies based on national and regional inputs.

16. Many Governments are in the process of establishing national committees to advise and assist in national preparations for UNCED, including preparation of the national reports. In some cases these consist entirely of representatives of government ministries and agencies. In other cases national committees have been broadened to include representatives of science, industry and other non-governmental constituencies and interest groups or these have come together in a separate organization. In accordance with the decision of the Preparatory Committee that there should be broad-based involvement of relevant NGOs in the preparatory process, the secretariat has been actively encouraging the establishment of national committees and the broadest possible participation by and involvement of NGOs and interest groups in preparations for the Conference at the national level. It has also been endeavouring to mobilize special financial support to assist developing countries in this respect and has been utilizing extrabudgetary funds made available to it for this purpose to facilitate the contributions of national institutions in developing countries and experts to the preparatory process.

D. External relations

17. Through its External Relations Unit, the secretariat has established liaison and a broad range of contacts with Governments, agencies, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and interest groups. It has initiated a series of periodic briefings at its Geneva headquarters as well as in New York and Nairobi.

18. As preparations for UNCED require system-wide cooperation within the United Nations system, special efforts are made to ensure that full use is made of the opportunities provided by the many other United Nations conferences and meetings to elicit contributions to preparations for UNCED. This process has been facilitated by the valuable discussions concerning UNCED at the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination in New York in October 1990 as well as the sessions of the Designated Officials for Environmental Matters in Rome in October and Geneva in December.

1. Non-governmental organizations

19. The Preparatory Committee pointed out in its decision 1/1 1/ that the effective contributions of NGOs in the preparatory process were in its interest and agreed on broad-based involvement of relevant NGOs. The General Assembly at its forty-fifth session authorized the Preparatory Committee to continue to apply, for the purpose of the preparatory process, the provisional arrangements agreed upon at Nairobi concerning the participation of NGOs in the process. The proposal of the Chairman, made in accordance with the request of the Preparatory Committee, as to a procedure for determining NGOs' competence and relevance to the work of the Preparatory Committee, will be presented at the current session.

20. A number of NGOs with extensive scientific expertise in the environment and development field are contributing information and studies to the preparatory process. Representatives of several NGOs are participating on a personal basis in secretariat working parties and consultative groups that are engaged in preparing the substantive documentation requested by the Preparatory Committee.

21. Particular mention needs to be made of the numerous electronic conferences (bulletin boards) that have been set up by NGOs on the networks of the Association of Progressive Communications (APC), 2/ as a direct result of the UNCED global electronic network. These can be found on EcoNet, and are shared with the other APC networks world wide. They include discussions of the agenda items of the Conference; national activities; and preparations for the Conference itself, just to name a few.

22. The growing involvement of NGOs enriches and enhances the Conference preparatory process, tapping invaluable expertise of important constituencies - youth, women, trade unions, scientists, religious leaders, indigenous people, educators, cultural leaders, physicians and other professional groups. A notable recent development is the formation of a business council for sustainable development to make available to the preparatory process the insights and perspectives of industry.

23. With the encouragement of the secretariat, NGOs have been forming broad-based constituencies and coalitions to increase the effectiveness of their participation in the preparatory process, including sessions of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself. A significant example is the establishment of the International Facilitating Committee comprised of various NGO networks, the plans for an NGO conference in 1991 sponsored by the Government of France and organized by the Environment Liaison Center International, as well as a number of regional forums organized by the Centre for Our Common Future.

24. The secretariat, in line with the Preparatory Committee's decision 1/24 on the guidelines for national reports 1/ has taken steps to encourage and facilitate the involvement of NGOs at the country level in special committees or working groups engaged in preparing national reports.

25. The Secretary-General of the Conference has sought extrabudgetary resources, in addition to the voluntary fund established pursuant to General Assembly

resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989, in order to facilitate access to the especially important contributions that would not otherwise be available from institutions and experts from developing countries.

26. The secretariat's efforts to mobilize funding for these purposes has been valuably supplemented by the establishment of an independent, non-profit organization, EcoFund '92, for the specific purpose of mobilizing private funds to finance non-governmental activities in support of UNCED preparations.

27. The secretariat has developed modalities for facilitating the participation of NGOs at Preparatory Committee meetings, in particular through briefings, consultations and also the provision of modest office space and copying facilities. A part of the extrabudgetary resources secured by the Secretary-General will be used for these purposes as well as for the distribution of an NGO dossier explaining Conference aims and procedures.

2. Public information activities

28. UNCED's programme of public information is carried out in close cooperation with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat to which budgetary resources were allocated for this purpose. An initial UNCED brochure has been prepared, a Conference logo has been designed and development of the other activities provided for in the budget is under way. These include: segments on environment and development in "UN in Action"; television spots; information kits for conferences; journalists' round tables; an educational video and teaching guide; radio special-feature documentaries and poster production and distribution.

29. UNCED has begun producing a bi-monthly newsletter. As the main public information vehicle of the UNCED secretariat, it will focus particularly on providing summaries of the key issues and developments in respect of preparations for the Conference and on the whole range of related activities being undertaken by UNCED, other agencies, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system, NGOs and other private sector groups.

30. It is also planned to issue features on an ad hoc basis on interesting aspects of the preparatory process with a view to securing coverage in both general international press agencies and quality individual outlets as well as in outlets with a particular interest in development and environmental issues.

31. Several initiatives are being taken world wide in the audiovisual field, including production of special television programmes, so as to generate public awareness and support for UNCED and to develop a broad understanding of UNCED's objectives.

E. UNCED information system

32. The UNCED information system (UIS) is being implemented, step by step, as originally reported to the UNCED Preparatory Committee meeting at Nairobi

(A/CONF.151/PC/INF/3). UIS consists of two major elements: the UIS information base of who is doing what in the United Nations system on environment and development issues, and the global electronic network for communicating UNCED documents and information.

33. The UIS information base is now operational. However, the information base does not as yet cover comprehensively all the major environment and development issues being considered by the 1992 Conference. All agencies of the United Nations, as well as relevant inter- and non-governmental organizations have been requested to supply the UNCED secretariat with information about their activities for this purpose.

34. Another element of UIS, the global electronic network, has been in place for some time. APC networks, the Telecommunications Cooperative Network (TCN) and the World Press Centre (WPC) have all been receiving information from the secretariat electronically for their respective constituencies. Other electronic networks have also been approached with a view to increasing the number of existing networks in the UNCED global electronic network. A well-balanced advisory group was formed to advise the UNCED secretariat on UIS. Issues that have been considered by this advisory group include special programmes to allow developing country access to UIS and special activities to be planned for the Conference itself.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES: VOLUNTARY AND TRUST FUNDS

35. It may be recalled that the Preparatory Committee, in its decision 1/3 of 29 August 1990, 1/ decided to recommend to the General Assembly that payment be made from the Voluntary Fund for the travel expenses of representatives of the developing countries and in addition, on an exceptional basis, of a daily subsistence allowance for representatives of the least developed countries. This recommendation was approved by the General Assembly in resolution 45/248 of 21 December 1990.

36. In its resolution 45/211 of the same date, the General Assembly reaffirmed its original decision that the operations of the Fund be "to enable developing countries, in particular the least developed among them, to participate fully and effectively in the Conference and its preparatory process, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/228, section II, paragraph 15".

37. The cumulative effect of these two resolutions it to require UNCED to provide representatives from developing countries with one ticket per delegation and, exceptionally, to provide the delegations from least developed countries a daily subsistence allowance. Appropriate arrangements were made to make available to the developing countries that so requested a round-trip air ticket to Geneva. Should all developing countries avail themselves of this facility, it is estimated that an amount of $616,000 will be utilized for this purpose. By adding to this amount expenditures of $103,000 incurred on the occasion of the Nairobi Preparatory Committee meeting, the Voluntary Fund will incur total expenditures of $719,000 out of contributions to the Voluntary Fund currently amounting to $813,500. This would leave a balance of $94,500 in the Fund as compared with the amount of $1,700,000

estimated to be required to arrange for the continued attendance of developing countries at future sessions of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself.

38. Action was immediately taken following the adoption by the General Assembly of these two resolutions to inform all Member States of their financial implications, to inform all developing countries of the arrangements being made for the Preparatory Committee meetings and to appeal for increased donations to the Voluntary Fund. It should be noted as at 31 January 1991 pledges and contributions to the Voluntary Fund have been received from the following Member States: Canada: $180,000; Finland: $203,000; Myanmar: $500; Netherlands: $100,000; Norway: $300,000; Singapore: $50,000; and United Kingdom: $50,000.

39. The Preparatory Committee may wish to note that on the occasion of the Nairobi session travel expenses were provided to the representatives of 62 developing countries with a daily subsistence allowance being paid to 14 least developed countries. It is possible that fewer developing countries took advantage of the Voluntary Fund at this period because it provided for payment of the ticket only. The number of developing countries taking advantage of the new provisions of the Fund will be known at the conclusion of the current session.

40. Because of the limited resources provided under the regular budget for the Conference, the General Assembly was informed at its last session of the establishment of a separate Trust Fund for Preparatory Activities to finance a number of support activities for the Conference. These activities are as follows:

(a) The need to commission scientific, policy and research institutions in developing countries to provide specialized studies and analyses of issues to be addressed by the Conference, utilizing the expertise and experience of developing countries and examining such issues from the perspective of their experience, interests and needs;

(b) The need for exceptionally qualified and young people to act as research assistants and, in doing so, provide them with valuable training experience, while enabling them to make an important contribution to preparations for the Conference;

(c) A special in-depth study and seminar on the policy and practical measures required to give effect to the environment-development relationship at the levels of economic and sectoral policies and their implementation in each of the major areas to be addressed by the Conference. The Preparatory Committee has determined that each issue be examined on the basis of full integration of environment and development factors. This work is therefore of central importance to the preparatory process and has already received commitments of support from the Government of the Netherlands and UNDP;

(d) Establishment of a UNCED global information network to provide, using the latest computer information and telecommunication system techniques, information on a continuing basis to Governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and other interested parties, concerning various aspects of the preparatory work and related matters and to make such information broadly available, particularly to users in developing countries;

(e) A project for the application of advanced systems analysis techniques to support the preparatory process, particularly in respect of defining and elaborating the substantive linkages amongst key sectoral and cross-sectoral issues to be addressed by the Conference and contribute to the analytical basis for development and elaboration of action options for consideration by the Preparatory Committee and the Conference, to be undertaken by the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis, Laxenburg, Austria;

(f) Technical assistance to developing countries to assist in national-level preparations for the Conference and related contributions to regional and global-level preparations.

41. National-level preparations, including the preparation of national reports, will be of primary importance to the contributions of developing countries to the Conference and to its success. The UNCED secretariat, in cooperation with UNDP and others, is making special efforts to mobilize the technical assistance and related support developing countries may require to assist in their national preparations. Much of it will come directly from existing multilateral and bilateral sources, but this will need to be supplemented by additional financial resources for which special contributions are being sought.

42. The total amount of resources required to carry out fully this programme of support activities is estimated at $15 million, of which an amount of $5 million has so far been pledged or collected. No effort is being spared in trying to secure the balance of funds required. The following countries have so far contributed or pledged funds to the Trust Fund: Canada: $320,000; the Netherlands: $1,370,000; Sweden: $3,000,000; Switzerland: $80,000; the United Kingdom: $221,000. Contributions by way of funds, equipment or staff services in support of the activities of the Trust Fund have also been pledged or received from the Government of Canada, the Rockefeller Foundation, the EcoFund '92, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNDP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

43. Given the limited resources made available under the regular budget, it is obvious that the UNCED secretariat will not be able to carry out to the full extent all the activities required for the thorough preparation of the 1992 Conference unless it is able to obtain extrabudgetary financial support. This was recognized by the General Assembly, which took note of the establishment of the Trust Fund for Preparatory Activities. A number of Governments have already made generous contributions to the two funds. The Secretary-General of the Conference records with special gratitude the contributions made to date and calls on others in a position to do so to make new or additional contributions to the two funds.

III. OVERVIEW OF DOCUMENTATION AND ISSUES BEFORE THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE

A. Overview of documentation

44. The documentation before the Preparatory Committee at the second session is very much more voluminous than at the first session. This is because the secretariat has responded to the many requests made to it by the Preparatory Committee at its first session and presented separate papers on virtually every agenda item. The broad objective of the documentation presented at the second session is:

(a) To provide a synoptic background on each of the major substantive issues;

(b) To indicate the nature of the work under way in the secretariat;

(c) To suggest potential areas for action in broad terms.

45. These documents may be considered as providing the basis for the essential transition from the overview of United Nations system-wide activities relevant to General Assembly resolution 44/228 and the preliminary discussion of the issues concerned at the first session of the Preparatory Committee to the development of the concrete action proposals which the Preparatory Committee is expected to produce for consideration by the Conference.

46. The balance of the papers is tilted very much towards an exposition of issues and a review of current activities. The guidance provided by the Preparatory Committee at the current session will provide a basis for the fuller articulation of potential areas for action that would then become the principal themes of the documents for the third session of the Preparatory Committee to be held in August. There would thus be a logical progression from a broad review and articulation of major areas of concern at the first session to a more detailed review of issues and current activities and preliminary consideration of areas for action at the second session to a focus mainly on crystallization of specific action proposals at the third session of the Preparatory Committee.

47. The nature of the issues being addressed by this Conference are such that there is a need for innovative and far-sighted action. Yet the time available for developing innovative programmes and agreeing on a framework for their implementation is very short. It is therefore necessary that at the current session the Preparatory Committee address itself to potential areas for action that could be developed further for consideration at the remaining sessions. Hence suggestions on such potential areas for action are contained in the papers that deal with the sectoral issues.

48. Cross-sectoral issues were considered by the Preparatory Committee in an informal meeting at its first session. At the second session the cross-sectoral issues are scheduled for formal discussion in plenary. The documentation on these issues placed before the Preparatory Committee at this stage raises certain issues for consideration. The view taken by the Preparatory Committee on these issues will provide the basis for identifying potential areas for action which could be developed further for consideration.

B. Potential output of Conference

49. At the first session of the Preparatory Committee the possible output of the 1992 Conference were outlined in the statement of the Secretary-General. The Preparatory Committee asked that the ideas outlined there should be elaborated in greater detail.

1. Conventions

50. Global conventions on certain issues (e.g. climate and biodiversity) were indicated in General Assembly resolution 44/228 as a possible output of the 1992 Conference and the prospect has been raised of a possible global convention on forestry. The negotiating processes for global conventions parallels the preparatory process. In the case of the climate convention, it is envisaged that the framework convention would be finalized and opened for signature at the 1992 Conference. The General Assembly resolution also recognizes the linkage between the preparatory process for the 1992 Conference and the negotiating process on the climate convention. Such linkage applies to other negotiating processes that may be set up on issues relevant to UNCED.

51. One important matter that the Preparatory Committee should address is the nature of its interaction with these negotiating processes. One aspect of these negotiations that the Preparatory Committee might particularly wish to examine is the need for close coordination and interaction between the processes of negotiating a forestry protocol of the climate convention, the convention on biodiversity and the possible global forestry convention in the light of the common elements of the subject-matter with which each will deal.

52. Global conventions will enshrine certain basic legal principles. However, international action on many of these issues will neither begin nor end with the enunciation of legal principles. Specific programmes and actions need to be developed to address these issues, their underlying causes and their effects. While many of these programmes and actions will ultimately be mandated and carried out pursuant to the provisions of conventions when they come into force, the process of developing and implementing them on a voluntary basis should proceed in parallel with the negotiating processes. Many such programmes and actions will be of such a nature that Governments will be prepared, and in some cases may even prefer, to proceed with them on a voluntary basis before they become mandatory under a legal agreement. Developing and initiating such programmes and actions in parallel with the negotiating processes can at the same time do much to facilitate the negotiations themselves, while providing the basis for their expeditious and effective implementation when the relevant instrument comes into force. The preparatory process can also contribute positively to the negotiating processes on the conventions by clarifying, as indicated above, the linkages between the issues being addressed in each of the individual negotiations.

53. Another major contribution that the UNCED preparations can make to the processes of negotiating the relevant conventions is by examining and pointing out the policy directions that emerge from its consideration of the interaction of environment and development in respect of the issues being addressed in the

negotiations. UNCED is a conference on both environment and development and one of its primary tasks will be to identify policy and programmatic measures designed to address the developmental and environmental dimensions of issues on an integrated basis in the areas subject to negotiations. These areas will also require examination by the Preparatory Committee in their relation to the cross-sectoral issues it will be considering as potential areas for action in respect of financial resources, technology transfer and legal and institutional arrangements. The Preparatory Committee's discussions on these issues and the decisions that it arrives at on new initiatives should help to underpin the conventions. Thus the Preparatory Committee's role can be seen as one of providing broad and complementary support to these negotiating processes. In particular, the Preparatory Committee may wish to consider these issues in the context of the negotiations on the climate convention.

2. Earth Charter

54. The Earth Charter is envisaged as a basic statement or declaration of principles to govern the relationships of people and nations with each other and with the Earth to ensure our common future in both environmental and developmental terms. The secretariat is preparing a list of the various elements that might be considered for inclusion in such a charter and an analysis of existing instruments that refer to the same or related matters. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the process by which this Earth Charter might best be formulated and discussed.

3. Agenda 21

55. "Agenda 21" is envisaged as a programme of action for the implementation of the principles enunciated in the Earth Charter with clearly articulated objectives, goals, targets, strategies and action programmes, costing and allocation of institutional roles. The potential areas for action identified in the documents on the sectoral issues and on the cross-sectoral issues are the ingredients from which the Agenda 21 would be drawn up. A more detailed outline, still of a very preliminary nature, of the structure of Agenda 21 is given in the annex to the present report. The Preparatory Committee is invited to consider carefully the proposals on the structure of the Agenda contained in that annex and provide guidance to the secretariat on the further work in this regard. In particular, the Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the distinction between issue areas and action areas and the ways in which objectives, responsibilities, programmes and means could be articulated in different action areas. An example has also been given in the annex in order to help the Preparatory Committee to provide guidance as to the form and content of Agenda 21.

4. Financial resources

56. The action programmes that would emerge from the Preparatory Committee's consideration of various issues will require funds for implementation. Hence the fourth element in the potential output of the Conference was indicated as measures

for financing the actions provided for in Agenda 21 and in particular to ensure access by developing countries to the additional financial resources they will require to integrate the environmental dimension into their own development policies and practices, as well as the incremental costs that will be incurred by complying with international environmental conventions and protocols. A separate progress report on the issue of financial resources is placed before the Preparatory Committee in document A/CONF.151/PC/18, which points out some of the main questions the Committee may wish to consider in this respect. The Preparatory Committee's discussions on that paper will provide the guidance required for the further development of proposals in this critically important area.

5. Technology transfer

57. The fifth element in the outputs of the Conference was envisaged as measures to ensure that all countries, and particularly developing countries, have access to environmentally sound technologies on an equitable and affordable basis, as well as the capacity to make effective use of them. A separate paper (A/CONF.151/PC/17) on mechanisms for capacity-building and the development and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies is before the Preparatory Committee in order to seek its guidance on the specific issues that need to be addressed so as to develop proposals for its further consideration.

6. Institutions

58. The final output of the Conference was envisaged as measures for strengthening existing institutions, notably UNEP; the environmental capacities of development agencies and organizations; the processes of collaboration and coordination amongst them; and the machinery to enable environment and development issues to be examined at the policy level in their relationship to other important security, economic, humanitarian and related issues. Although, on the basis that form must follow function, these institutional issues can be resolved only after and in the light of the decisions taken by the Preparatory Committee in respect of each of the other substantive and cross-sectoral issues to which they relate. Nevertheless, the issues are complex and important and it is not too early to initiate the process of discussion that must precede these decisions. Accordingly, a progress report has been prepared (A/CONF.151/PC/20), which raises some of the principal questions the Preparatory Committee may wish to address in considering this important matter.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 46 (A/45/46).

2/ APC includes the following networks world wide: EcoNet, PeaceNet, ConflictNet, HomeoNet, GreenNet, AlterNex, Nicarao, Web, Pegasus, BolNet and FredsNet.

Annex

PROPOSALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGENDA 21: THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN THE PERIOD FOLLOWING THE CONFERENCE

Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

I. BACKGROUND

1. At its first substantive session, in decision 1/6 entitled "Report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development on the Activities of the Conference secretariat", the Preparatory Committee requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to prepare, for consideration at its second session, a more detailed report on his proposal for the development of a programme of work for the international community in the period following the Conference, and into the twenty-first century.

2. These initial proposals were described in the report of the Secretary-General a/ and, in particular, in paragraph 32 of his introductory statement. b/ In these documents, it was suggested that one of the most important outcomes of the Conference would be a programme of cooperative action to ensure the security of the resources and life-sustaining systems of the Earth and the progress and well-being of all its peoples in the twenty-first century. It was further suggested that this work programme might be termed "Agenda 21".

3. Agenda 21 was briefly described as a prioritized agenda with explicit goals, targets, priorities and assignment of responsibilities, which would provide a framework for action, the continuing process of review and revision, as well as a means of facilitating coordination and cooperation amongst the various actors concerned. These points are further developed here, placing particular emphasis on the dynamic character of Agenda 21, describing its structure, general thrust and facilitating character.

4. Agenda 21 will be not just the work programme emerging from the 1992 Conference, but also a mechanism to enable the international community to cooperate effectively in actions leading towards sustainable development. The 1992 Conference would, in that sense, be the first step in the evolution of Agenda 21. It could involve an agreement on the cooperative structure and mechanism of the Agenda as well as specific agreements on the content of the criticial work programmes that would be included in it.

5. The content of the programmes that will form Agenda 21 will be the result of the preparatory process of the Conference. The programmes will also be influenced by and related to other processes, including the negotiation of conventions currently under way, the results of major forthcoming conferences, as well as activities at the national and regional level. They will be further influenced by the current process of review and evaluation of major programmes of the international community.

II. THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AGENDA 21

6. Agenda 21 should be the structure and mechanism with which the international community reflects in its agreed actions, basic agreed ethical principles and broad environmental and developmental goals. At the same time, a process for building a consensus on intellectual scientific and methodological issues would provide a basis for the action programme in Agenda 21.

7. The international community has developed many processes for the formulation of programmes of action both on environmental issues and on developmental issues. There are also a variety of processes for coordinating these actions. An important function of Agenda 21 should be to provide a coordinating structure and mechanism for:

(a) Taking full acount of linkages between issues in the development of action programmes;

(b) Ensuring that programmes of action simultaneously address both environmental issues and developmental needs;

(c) Ensuring that the programmes are backed up with the provision of necessary support and means for implementation.

8. The programmatic component of Agenda 21 should be designed to meet evolving goals, needs and objectives, adapting it through a continuous process of review, feedback, evaluation and reformulation. To facilitate this process, Agenda 21 will be computerized to allow rapid updating and change. The manipulations that are possible with a computerized system will also permit different cuts to display different elements and the roles of different actors.

9. For example, the Agenda could be displayed in terms of all the actions or programmes that involve reforestation or training activities. It could also be displayed in terms of the actors that will need to play an active role in aspects of the implementation, for example, local authorities. The fact that it is computerized will also allow for a broad network of users and actors to have easy access to the programme of work and be aware of changes or of progress achieved.

10. The implementation of the goals that Agenda 21 is directed at will involve a vast array of agents and decision makers - national Governments, the international community through the United Nations system and other international organizations which will be the direct implementors of many programmes; the multilateral and bilateral aid community and other institutions involved in supporting these programmes. Agenda 21 must also address specific constituencies and groups.

11. In summary, the main characteristics of Agenda 21 should be that it is:

(a) Flexible, responding to varied and evolving needs and requirements;

(b) Expedient, in that it builds on what exists, modifying and strengthening it as required;

(c) Innovative, in that it identifies new solutions to known problems;

(d) Acceptable, in that it is based on a wide-ranging process of consultation and agreement;

(e) Universal, in that it actively involves the various groups that have a stake in the process of sustainable development;

(f) Effective, in that it will provide the structures, mechanisms, procedures and supporting measures that make action possible.

III. THE STRUCTURE AND GENERAL CONTENT OF AGENDA 21

12. Agenda 21 would be structured around a series of major clusters and sections. The accompanying chart presents this structure graphically. Each of these sections would be supported by reference material, and would describe how to access this material.

13. The first cluster - the basis for action - will be formed by three elements: an overview of the state of development and environment; the enunciation of basic principles underlying sustainable development including strategic action principles and broad developmental and environmental goals.

14. The second cluster - the action agenda - would be articulated along two sections: an analytical one describing programmatic approaches, and the action section, which would describe the programme of action proper.

15. The third cluster - the instruments for action - would consist of two sections: the specific tools for analysis, management and action, and the supporting structures and enabling mechanisms that can make action possible. In this connection, the major strategic directions and essential actions that are necessary to reach goals for the world community would be the most important thrust of this cluster. Material would be drawn from a very broad array of technical and scientific material, national and regional experience as well as from the preparatory process itself and associated activities.

A. THE BASIS FOR ACTION

1. Overview of the state of development and the state of the environment

16. The purpose of this element would be to give the context within which Agenda 21 is placed. It would contain a brief overview of the current state of development and of society covering such issues as the state of human populations; the state of the international economy, trade patterns, the debt situation and other important developmental parameters. Linked to this would be a review of the state of the environment, including trends in global change, the current status of natural resources and resource use. Thus the overview will pay particular attention to the interaction between developmental and environmental issues.

17. This overview would clearly show the current opportunities and constraints within which the process of sustainable development must be promoted. By continually updating this body of information, there would be a base of factual data on which to base decisions. Thus, updating should be part of an agreed programme to monitor the status of development and environment.

2. Principles underlying sustainable development

18. The purpose here would be to gather agreed principles that should govern a society that is sustainable in both human and developmental as well as environmental terms. Basic principles spelled out in the Earth Charter and agreed upon by the international community to guide the relations between people and between nations and between humankind and nature would be elaborated in terms of translating them into action. The scientific basis for guiding strategic interventions that can further the process of sustainable development would also be touched upon, including, for example, ecological principles guiding environmental management and principles governing the processes of social or economic interactions and the management of developmental processes.

3. Setting broad developmental and environmental goals

19. This section would articulate the major developmental and environmental goals for the human community as it moves into the twenty-first century - goals such as the eradication of poverty, achievement of greater equity, stemming of the degradation of the environment and achieving a sustainable balance between human and natural resources.

20. These goals would draw upon those that have already been mentioned in General Assembly resolution 44/228, and synthesize the main directions which can be drawn from the preparatory process.

21. An important methodological effort should be made here to develop ways of spelling out these goals so that they simultaneously address developmental and environmental aspirations, and also to exemplify the new economic thinking that must support the sustainable development process.

B. THE ACTION AGENDA

1. Defining programmatic approaches

22. The main purpose of this section would be to stress the evolving relationship between environmental and developmental issues and the areas of policy or sectoral action and highlight the linkages between and among the different factors involved in environment and development.

23. This suggests a distinction between issues and action areas. The issues are those referred to in General Assembly resolution 44/228. The action areas refer to clusters of programme activities that have a common economic or institutional

basis. A given issue - say climate change - may require action in more than one action area - say, energy, transportation, settlements planning, reforestation. Equally positive action in any one area - say, forestry - may contribute to solving more than one issue. For example, reforestation programmes can simultaneously respond to the need to provide carbon sinks to counteract the effects of emissions, provide timber and fuel for development purposes, provide habitats for wildlife and protect watersheds and soils.

24. It is important to try to scope these action areas, in order to identify the most crucial areas where action can respond to the requirements of solving various developmental and environmental problems before the Conference. The Preparatory Committee may wish to determine which are the important leverage points on which it might concentrate for the moment. In time, these leverage points may shift and would need to be revised.

2. The programme of action

25. This section will describe the indicative programme of action to be agreed upon by the international community. It would address the problems and objectives identified in General Assembly resolution 44/228, structured around the leverage points identified by the preparatory process. The programme of action would particularly emphasize the policy directions and coordinating mechanisms that can support the sustainable development process as the world community moves into the twenty-first century.

26. Agenda 21 will be presented in terms of the policy-level agenda, which would be endorsed at the Conference in Brazil. The operational aspects of the agenda would be developed within this policy framework. Programmes described in full detail would constitute the work programme for the international community. It should be noted that, by the time of the Conference only certain of these programmes could be developed in full detail. Others would be in different stages of development.

27. The programme would have defined objectives and targets within an agreed time-frame and would define agents and institutions and their responsibilities. These agents would include a wide array of groups and constituencies, but their commitments and responsibilities would differ according to their respective roles. Thus, the primary emphasis would be for the programmes of the United Nations system. However, the framework of the programme of action would be broad enough to include and facilitate actions by other constituencies and they are being encouraged to establish their own agenda to complement and support Agenda 21. The programme would define the appropriate and necessary supporting and enabling mechanisms to carry out the programme. Finally, as far as possible foreseen actions would be costed. These points are described in greater detail in section IV below.

28. This programme would be subject to a continuous monitoring and review process, leading to adjustments and to an evolving set of objectives, targets and actions to reflect changing circumstances. The dynamic nature of Agenda 21 would thus be most

evident at this level. But in order for the Agenda to be implemented and in particular, by the agencies of the United Nations system, and fully incorporated into their programmes, ways and means would have to be devised to set up an ad hoc review and approval process.

C. INSTRUMENTS FOR ACTION

1. Tools for analysis, management and action

29. This section would describe the "tool kit" and methodological and guiding tools and procedures that are needed for analysing and acting upon the development/environment interphase that is necessary for giving operational reality to Agenda 21.

30. Essential tools for analysis and action would be described, including those for integrating developmental and environmental factors, for introducing environmental variables into economic analysis and others. These would be drawn from the existing repertoire of "best practicable practices" as well as from current work aiming to elucidate the nature of the development and environment linkages and to give an explicitly operational content to the concept of sustainable development.

31. This tool kit would be constantly refined and updated, giving the possibility of increasingly sophisticated and effective management methods.

2. Supporting structures and enabling mechanisms

32. The purpose of this section would be to provide the framework, basic principles and major reference points that underlie the more specific mechanisms that would be developed in respect of particular areas and actions. At this level, only major mechanisms would be delineated, but references would be made to both international as well as national dimensions.

33. The basic facilitating structures and mechanisms that can give operational reality to the process of sustainable development, as identified in General Assembly resolution 44/228 and particularly paragraph 15 thereof, would include:

(a) Institutions and related structures, processes and mechanisms that support and guide the sustainable development process;

(b) Legal instruments and regulatory processes that concern the developmental and environmental protection process;

(c) The mechanisms for funding and for facilitating transfer of additional financial resources, particularly to developing countries for financing the sustainable development process;

(d) The mechanisms to facilitate the development of, ensure favourable access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, including special

concessional or preferential terms, as well as the methods, procedures and equipment to support the process of sustainable development;

(e) The major economic mechanisms and instruments that can be applied to promote sustainable development;

(f) The package of scientific research and knowledge, monitoring, assessment and information exchange, awareness-raising, environmental and developmental education and training, which provides support to the environmental and developmental process.

IV. ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION

34. As already suggested above, the specific areas of action will emerge during the preparatory process. However, the generic elements that will be included when developing programmes in specific action areas can be defined now. Various aspects would be covered for each of them and are briefly described below.

35. Objectives will be agreed upon and formulated in both developmental and environmental terms. The duality of purpose will be made clear at all times. These dual or multipurpose objectives will assist in providing a more explicitly developmental-environmental direction.

36. Linkages between environmental issues, development sectors and action areas will be a key element. Analysis of these linkages along various lines are possible, including issue to issue, environmental issue to development sector, sector to specific action area, action area to cross-sectoral issues and others are possible. This analysis would be illuminated and supported by work currently being undertaken on the nature of these interactions. Particular emphasis would be placed on the interactions between population, production and consumption patterns, quantifying environmental and social change in some cases. By exploring linkages it would also be possible to determine areas of convergence or stress.

37. Priority setting will follow the identification of the crucial areas of action and will determine the shape of the programme. The most effective leverage points could be selected for concentration of priority actions, which will also take into account the results of the preparatory process. Of particular usefulness would be to focus on the vulnerable areas and irreversible processes.

38. Setting targets will give focus to action and will provide markers against which progress can be monitored. These targets would be expressed in terms of the concrete developmental and environmental results expected. For example, if the objective is to achieve food security through sustainable production systems, the target would have to be formulated in terms of desired amounts of food, various levels of resilience and flexibility of the system and given levels of consumption. These targets could be expanded to include targets for factors such as institution building, levels of resource transfers and degrees of training. There cannot however be a precise quantification in each case, as it must be recognized that the process of fixing targets is a continuous one, with many variables.

39. A time-frame for the setting of priorities and reaching of targets will also be necessary. Perhaps three major time groups could be considered. A first cut, which would be specific and detailed, could encompass the period up to the end of the century, to coincide with current programme cycles; this would be followed by broad directions for the next 20 to 25 years and finally some quite general suggestions for possible directions into the middle of the next century.

40. Specifying programme actions will be the most critical step of the process. It will be important to ensure that actions are directed towards the causal factors and root problems. Likewise, it will be important to ensure that the programme actions are articulated in such a manner that they can respond to multiple objectives and be supportive of other actions taken elsewhere. These strategic directions and programme actions will build upon existing programmes at the international and national level and will endeavour to fill gaps and impart innovative approaches where necessary.

41. Identifying the actors and institutions. The primary focus of the programme of action will be on the role of departments, organizations and agencies in the United Nations system. However, by defining other possible agents in the international community, in national Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), specific constituencies, the private sector and others, it will be possible to define programmes so that all may contribute in a concerted and efficient manner to reaching targets and objectives.

42. Defining the legal framework will also be an important element of the programme. The links of the programme of action to international agreements would be specified. In addition, national or regional legal provisions and legal regimes would be mentioned where relevant. An important element in this area is the question of enforcement of compliance, and how this can be achieved through the programme.

43. Defining the various enabling mechanisms and supporting measures necessary to implement the programme in all its various aspects is the most important crucial aspect that can give operational reality to the programme. The following would be given prominence but would not exclude other elements that might come into play in special cases:

(a) The role of science and research;

(b) The application of various tools, including monitoring, assessment and evaluation as well as economic and management tools;

(c) The type and extent of human resources, development and the manner of imparting education and training;

(d) The awareness-raising campaigns and information exchange necessary to give prominence and acceptance to the programmes.

44. Defining the technological requirements to implement the programme is yet another important element that will determine the environmental soundness of the

programme and the rate of development. Here it would be important to specify the types of technology needed and levels of further development as well as modalities to ensure favourable access and transfer of environmentally sound technologies.

45. Costing the actions will give a clear picture of the magnitude of the effort required, and indicate how to make a more efficient allocation of scarce resources.

46. Financing the programme actions: in addition to indicating the source of the funds required to carry out the action programme, including new and additional financial resources, it will be necessary to indicate the funding mechanisms that come into play, and draw up a strategy for efficient deployment of these funds in each case.

47. These elements of the programme are intended to illustrate the types of factors that must be taken into account, but are not exhaustive. Others would emerge during the preparatory process. Whatever other additional elements are included, they must all be reviewed through the normal process of programme management, that includes a constant follow-up process of monitoring, assessment, evaluation and readjustment.

48. The elaboration of this framework will have to be done with greater specificity for each area. A tentative example follows.

V. AN EXAMPLE OF PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT: PROTECTION OF THE ATMOSPHERE

49. The example presented here is meant only to illustrate the structure of a potential part of Agenda 21. Consequently, the various boxes are not meant to be either exhaustive, or representative of those issues, but only preliminary examples at this stage. Furthermore, the Preparatory Committee is not required, at this stage to approve the content of this example. If the Preparatory Committee agrees with such an approach, more detail can be provided at the next session.

50. Table 1, major environment and development issues, divides the atmosphere issue into its three main environmental components: climate change, air pollution and the ozone layer:

(a) In each case, considerable attention has to be paid to the developmental linkages, as well as the linkages between sub-issues, such as, for example that between climate change and air pollution, as well as between issues, such as between forestry and climate change. These linkages are important for the analysis of the problem, but more importantly to develop specific sectoral targets, policy responses and appropriate institutional mechanisms for these;

(b) For each of these issues, overall goals and objectives could be set, based on first principles, or other fundamental ecological or socio-economic factors. For example, in the area of climate change, one such objective may be the stabilization of the global atmospheric carbon dioxide concentrations.

51. In Table 2, a possible programme of action, a number of major action areas are given as examples. These would eventually have to be prioritized. The action areas can have impacts on one or more issues and sub-issues, as shown in the third column. It is important to note, that these programmes can, and indeed will, have important impacts on other issues also, which are not shown in this table:

(a) For each programme action specific sectoral targets could be set at the national, regional or sometimes even global levels. Such targets may include national carbon dioxide emission targets, automobile efficiency targets, as well as goals to achieve a certain level of public transportation in a country or in a city;

(b) Some programme actions may differ, depending on the geopolitical region concerned. For example, energy efficiency in most industrialized countries might mean carrying out the same activity with less energy input. The same concept in a developing country, on the other hand, may mean carrying out more activities with the same energy input;

(c) Similarly, for each programme action, the agents will have to be identified. These could be national Governments, regional and global intergovernmental, or non-governmental organizations. In this section, attention could be drawn to any lack of appropriate actors or institutions, and proposal could be made for changing the mandate of existing institutions or even proposing new ones, if necessary;

(d) Again, each programme action will necessarily have a technology component. Some technologies will need to be developed, while other, existing ones may need to be transferred to developing countries. Many actions will also require the development of human resources;

(e) Finally, each action will have a finance, and economics component. On the one hand, programme actions will have a cost. A discussion will have to be made of the overall requirements; the sources of new funding, and the modalities for making these funds available. Furthermore, in some cases, economic instruments, such as targeted subsidies, taxes, emission permits, etc., may be used to achieve a certain goal. In the case of climate change, for example, carbon taxes could be used to encourage the transition away from fossil energies to more efficient and less polluting alternatives.

Notes

a/ A/CONF.151/PC/5 and Add.1 and 2.

b/ A/CONF.151/PC/5/Add.1.

Table 1. Major environment and development issues

ISSUE/SUB-ISSUE	DEVELOPMENTAL LINKAGES	LINKS WITH OTHER ISSUES	GOALS, OBJECTIVES
1. CLIMATE CHANGE	- Energy Production, Consumption - Transport - Land Use (Forestry, Agriculture, etc.) - Coastal Development - Human Settlements - Consumption Patterns, Life Styles - etc.	OTHER SUB-ISSUES: - Ozone (e.g. CFCs destroy Ozone) - Air Pollution (same process responsible) OTHER ISSUES: - Forests (CO2 sinks) - Oceans (Coastal Area Managmt.) - Water (Chngd Hydrology) - Land-use	- Rate of Global Climate Change (e.g., x°C/decade) - Stabilize and reduce to a certain level, in a certain time period anthropogenic greenhouse gases - etc.
2. AIR POLLUTION 2.1 Local Air Pollution 2.2 Transboundary Air Pollution	- Energy Production, Use - Transport - Industry - Human Settlements - etc.	OTHER SUB-ISSUES: - Climate (same process responsible) OTHER ISSUES: - Industry (major energy use and pollutant) - Health (direct impact)	- Outdoor/Indoor Air Quality (e.g., from WHO) - Transboundary Pollutant Flux - Country Pollutant Emissions
3. OZONE LAYER	- Industry - Consumption patterns, Life Styles - etc.	OTHER SUB-ISSUES: - Climate (CFCs are also greenhouse gases) OTHER ISSUES: - Hazardous Wastes (same strategies)	- Global Atmospheric CFC concentrations/emissions

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Table 2. A possible programme of action

ACTION AREAS	PRIORITY CATEGORY	IMPACTED ISSUES, SUB-ISSUES	TARGETS	CONSTITUENCY OR REGION SPECIFICITY	INSTITUTIONS, AGENTS, LEGAL FRAMEWORK	TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND TRANSFER	COSTING, FINANCE, ECONOMIC INSTRUMENTS
ENERGY EFFICIENCY		1, 2.1, 2.2	eg. Global, Regional, country or sector-specific efficiency targets, etc.	eg. Same activity with less Energy use for ICs; More activity with same energy for DCs, etc. a/	eg. National Action; Various UN Agencies, etc.	eg. Capacity-building in DCs; Development of Tech.; Transfer to DCs;	eg. Programme level funding; Global, National, Energy/Carbon Taxes; Tradeable Emission Permits; etc.
ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SUPPLIES		1, 2.1, 2.2	eg. % of Non-fossil supply in region, or country, etc.	eg. Increased non-fossil supplies in ICs; As above + more efficient fossil conversion in DCs; etc.	eg. National Action; Various UN Agencies, etc.	eg. Capacity-building in DCs; Development of Technology; Transfer to DCs; etc.	eg. Programme level funding; Global, National, Energy/Carbon Taxes; etc.
SUSTAINABLE LAND USE (Biomass Supplies, CO_2 Sinks, etc.)		(1)	eg. Net biomass growth (global, regional, local); CO_2 sinks; etc.	eg. Correlate with other land-use needs for DCs, etc.	eg. National Action; Various UN Agencies, etc.	eg. New Agricultural Technology, etc.	eg. Debt-Nature Swaps, etc.
TRANSPORT, SUSTAINABLE SETTLEMENTS		(2.1, 2.2, 3)	eg. % Public vs. Private transport; Pers-km travelled, etc.	eg. Need more person- and ton-kms for DCs, etc.	eg. National Action; Various UN Agencies; etc.	eg. Efficient Cars; Public Transp; Urban Planning; etc.	eg. transport fuel taxes, etc.
LOW-POLLUTION PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION		2.1, 2.2 3 Also: 1	eg. Region/country/ sector emissions; Waste production; etc.	eg. Indoor biomass combustion in DCs, etc.	eg. National Action; Regional Commissions; UN Agencies, etc.	eg. Low-pollution technologies, etc.	eg. Programme level funding, etc.
ADAPTATION		(1,2,3)	eg. Coastal Mngmnt. in No. of Countries; Stabilize, Restore food prod.; etc.	eg. Needs of vulnerable countries/people, etc.	eg. National, Regional Action; UN Agencies, etc.	eg. New Agric. Techn; Integrated Coastal Area Management; etc.	eg. Basic grants to most vulnerable, etc.
RESEARCH, MONITORING, FORECASTING		1, 2.1, 2.2 3	eg. Global Ocean Monitoring Netw.; Reliable Forecasts; etc.	eg. Specific actions in vulnerable areas, etc.	eg. National, Regional Action; Various UN Agencies; etc.	eg. Monitoring and assessment technology, etc.	eg. Funds for R&D activities; networking; etc.
EDUCATION, TRAINING INFORMATION		1, 2.1, 2.2 3	eg. Public access to information, etc.	eg. capacity-building in DCs, etc.	eg. National Action, Various UN Agencies, Regional Commissions, NGOs, etc.	eg. Teaching and training tools, etc.	eg. Funds for local capacity-building, etc.

a/ IC = industrialized countries; DC = developing countries.

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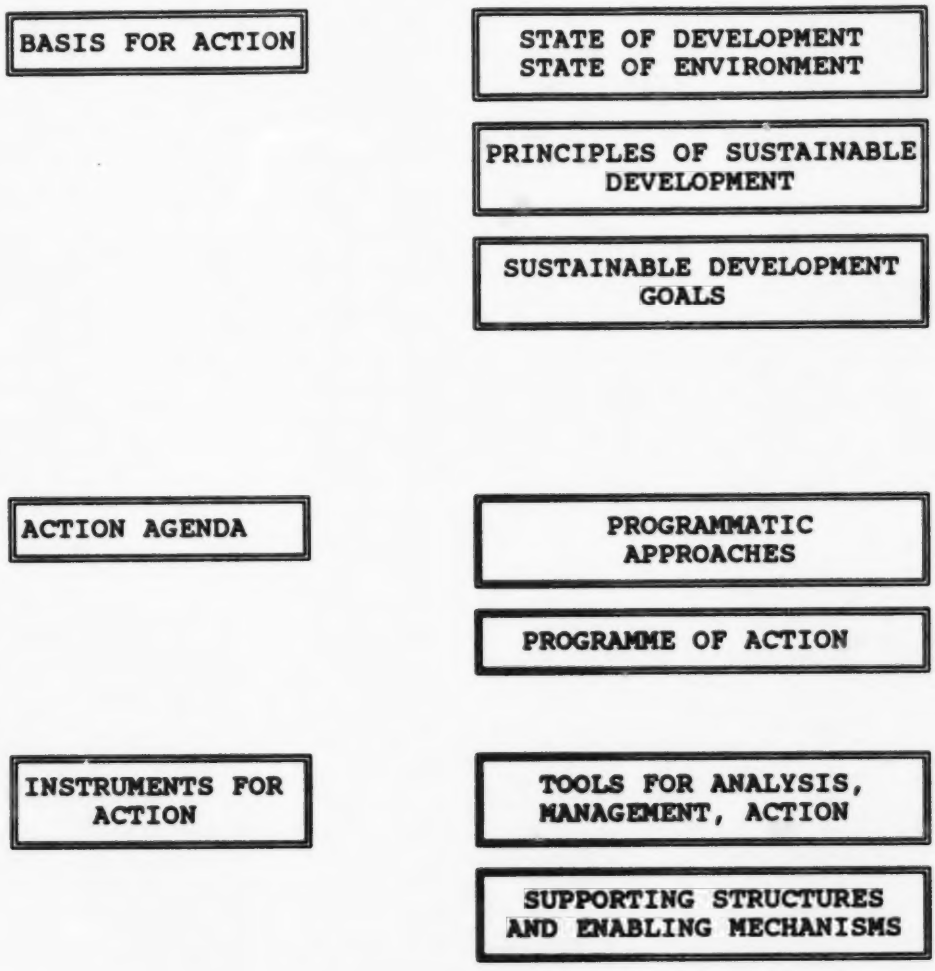
Figure 1

GENERAL STRUCTURE OF AGENDA 21

The different "boxes" represent chapters or sections of the Agenda. This figure is intended only to give an overall view of how the Agenda might be articulated. The column to the left indicates the three major clusters of the programme. The column to the right indicates the contents of the sections of Agenda 21.



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Item 2 (c) of the provisional agenda

PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE BASIS OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 44/228 AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT OTHER RELEVANT GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS:

CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES

Progress Report on Poverty and Environmental Degradation

Report of the Secretary-General of the Conference

INTRODUCTION

1. General Assembly resolution 44/228 specifies that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should address the issue of "improvement of the living and working environment of the poor in urban slums and rural areas, through the eradication of poverty by, inter alia, implementing integrated rural and urban development programmes, as well as taking other appropriate measures at all levels necessary to stem the degradation of the environment". The discussion on environment and development links at the first substantive session of the Preparatory Committee dealt specifically with the issue of the links between poverty and environmental degradation. This preliminary report has been prepared in response to subparagraph (a) (i) of decision 1/25 on Environment and Development adopted by the Preparatory Committee at its first substantive session. It has been prepared by the Secretariat in collaboration with relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations System.

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2. This report takes due account of the findings and recommendations of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development and the UNEP Environment Perspectives to Year 2000 and Beyond as well as written comments prepared by FAO, ILO, UNDP, the World Bank. The World Bank's "World Development Report", 1990, which deals with poverty and the UNDP's "Human Development Report", 1990, provided valuable inputs for this paper. The International Fund for Agricultural Development provided a series of studies focusing on the issue of environmental sustainability and rural poverty alleviation as also on the role of small farmers. The Swedish International Development Agency has submitted to the Secretariat a preliminary study on poverty, environment and development which has also been taken into account in the preparation of this paper. The Secretariat also received inputs from the International Institute of Environment and Development.

3. This report must be seen in the context of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade which stresses four priority aspects of development, all of which are relevant to the theme of this paper:

- Eradication of poverty and hunger;
- Human Resource and Institutional Development;
- Population;
- Environment.

4. The eradication of poverty and the protection of the environment are difficult to pursue in a situation where national income is not growing or is even declining, where terms of trade and losses accumulate and where the burden of debt reduces greatly the resources available both for current consumption as also for investment. Hence, a macro-economic environment with stable and higher growth, an increase in the resources available for savings and investment as also a policy environment which stimulates efficiency of resource use are in many ways a necessary condition for the success of any programmatic interventions directed at the links between poverty and environmental degradation. Subject to this basic qualification the Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the analysis of issues and potential areas for action presented below.

DIMENSIONS OF POVERTY

5. The dimensions of poverty have been analysed carefully in two recent reports by United Nations agencies. 1/ Some basic data, drawn from the "Human Development Report" are presented in Table I. Defining the poverty line as the income level below which a minimum nutritionally adequate diet plus essential non-food requirements are not affordable, the reports estimate that over 1 billion people live in absolute poverty in the Third World. Asia has 64 per cent of the developing countries' people in absolute poverty, Africa 24 per cent and Latin America and the Caribbean 12 per cent. Between 1970 and 1985 it appears that poverty grew fastest in Africa. This is also borne out by available data on nutritional status.

6. Human deprivation cannot be measured solely in terms of the number of people below a poverty line defined in terms of consumption. The

TABLE I

POVERTY AND NATURAL RESOURCES INDICATORS

Indicators	All Developing Countries	Least Developed Countries	Sub-Saharan Africa	Middle East and North Africa	South Asia	East and South East Asia	Latin America and the Caribbean	Industrial Countries	World
Population below Poverty Line (1977-87)									
URBAN %	27	59	34	--	41	--	36	--	--
RURAL %	35	72	61	--	53	18	61	--	--
Population Density (Persons per 1,000 hectares (1988))	1,583	2,635	595	463	2,971	1,368	388	1,088	1,467
Arable Land as % of Total (1984-86)	36	37	37	26	50	38	37	34	35
Livestock Per Capita (1984-86) Cattle Units per capita	0.73	1.07	0.99	1.09	0.63	0.48	1.42	1.11	0.82
Internal Renewable Water Resources Per Capita (1988) (1,000 cubic meters)	6.2	10.5	3.5	1.3	3.4	5.1	22.9	9.3	6.8

Source: UNDP, 1990 "Human Development Report", Oxford University Press, New York

"Human Development Report" estimates that 1.5 billion people in developing countries do not have access to health services, 1.75 billion do not have access to safe water, 2.8 billion do not have access to sanitation. It estimates the 870 million adults in developing countries are illiterate, 150 million children are malnourished and 240 million who ought to be in school are not in school. Summarizing these other dimensions of deprivation in terms of life expectancy and illiteracy, and combining this with per capita GDP, the "Human Development Report" defines a composite human development index. Estimates of this index show that human deprivation is most marked in the least developed countries and at the regional level in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. The range of this index for all developing countries is wide reflecting the great variation in the state of human development.

7. About three quarters of the developing countries' poor people live in rural areas. The rural poor are extremely variegated. They include landless labourers, subsistence farmers, tenant share croppers, women heads of household and children, unemployed youth, pastoralists, nomadic herders, ethnic or tribal minorities, small fishermen, the remote poor living in mountains and deserts and hunter gatherers within countries. There are also significant regional differences in the incidence of poverty within countries.

8. Though poverty in the Third World is primarily a rural phenomenon there is a recent trend towards the urbanization of poverty which is reflected in the rapid increase in urban slums and squatters settlements. Poverty also has a gender bias and a large proportion of poor households are headed by women. This is particularly so in rural Africa and in the urban slums of Latin America. The available evidence also shows a close link between poverty and environmental degradation. Nearly three quarters of the poor live in ecologically vulnerable areas with low agricultural potential - arid lands, soils with low fertility, steep slopes and in areas distant from the more rapidly growing parts of the economy. In many of these areas the growth of population has decreased the productivity of land and increased its vulnerability to flooding and soil erosion. 2/

9. The deprivation that poverty represents also leads to the poor being more vulnerable to external or internal stress. External stress can manifest itself in terms of adverse movements, in the terms of trade for export crops, exchange rate fluctuations or high interest rates while internal stress can arise from national economic conditions such as lack of investment and inflation, weather-related stress, urban congestion and alike. The pressures of fuelwood gathering, inappropriate farming techniques, population growth and over-grazing may, by decreasing the productivity of marginal lands, make the poor even more susceptible to drought and other natural disasters. There are also indications that the poor tend to settle in disaster prone areas more vulnerable to floods and land slides since often these are the only areas available to them.

THE UNDERLYING CAUSES

10. The link between poverty and environmental degradation is multi-faceted and complex, and the underlying causes have to be seen in terms of a variety of socio-cultural, institutional economic factors including the orientation of public policies. This analysis focuses attention on the macro-economic context within which development is taking place, demographic developments and access to means of livelihood and sustenance.

The Macro-economic Context

11. Economic growth in excess of population growth is imperative to reduce poverty in poor countries. Recognizing this, the World Commission on Environment and Development called for a new era of growth, based on sustainable resource use, as part of the strategy for sustainable development. 3/ The record of growth over the past three decades is presented in Table II. As this table shows, per capita incomes have declined sharply in Africa and Latin America during the eighties. In Sub-Saharan Africa per capita income now is lower than what it was 30 years ago. Current projections envisage a continued decline in per capita incomes in Sub-Saharan Africa even in the nineties. At the same time, it may be noted that South and East Asia, which account for more than half of the population of the developing countries, continued to grow at a pace significantly faster than the global average. 4/

12. For many developing countries the 1980s were characterized by shrinking resource flows, declining commodity prices, a rising international debt burden and increasing barriers to market access. The long-term vision required for pursuing sustainable development was difficult to maintain in this adverse economic environment.

13. According to some estimates, presented recently to the General Assembly, the net transfer of financial resources out of developing countries has been negative from 1983 onwards. 5/ This net outflow of resources from developing countries has its causes in a conjunction of factors, one of which is the increase in interest rates in the industrialized countries in order to counter inflationary pressures.

14. Because of adverse movements in the terms of trade and a lack of ability to increase export earnings rapidly enough, many countries could not cope with the rapid rise in debt service. With the debt crisis, finance from private creditors dried up and left many developing countries with huge debts to be serviced and no means to generate resources to halt the outflow of resources to industrialized economies.

15. The deterioration in the terms of trade for developing countries throughout the 1980s jeopardized their capacity to service their external debts and finance national development programmes. Between 1980 and 1988, the real prices of non-fuel commodities from developing countries declined by 40 per cent while fuel prices declined by 50 per cent. The terms of trade index for Sub-Saharan Africa dropped from 100 in 1984 to 72 in 1989. For a sample of middle-income highly indebted countries, which usually have a more diversified structure of exports, this index also plunged from 90 to 72 in the same period. 6/

16. The compounded impact of sizeable negative net financial transfers and adverse movements of the terms of trade generated a heavy burden for economies of many developing countries. The cost equivalance in terms of GDP of the reverse transfer of resources because of interest rate and terms of trade changes could amount to as much as 14 per cent for Sub-Saharan Africa, if changes during 1984-88 are compared to the average for the 1970s. For Latin America and the Carribean the same figure amounts to 10.3 per cent. 7/ The impact of these adverse international economic conditions on poverty and

TABLE II

POPULATION AND GROWTH OF GDP PER CAPITA, BY ECONOMIC REGION AND INCOME GROUPS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, 1960 - 1990 a/

Country group	Population (1980)		Average annual rate of growth GDP per capita			Per capita GDP			
	Millions	Percentage share	1961 - 1970	1971 - 1980	1981 - 1990	1960	1970	1980	1990
World	4 371 b/	100.0	3.2	1.9	1.3	1 601	2 191	2 647	3 000
Developed market economies	768	17.6	3.9	2.4	2.1	5 501	8 042	10 185	12 490
Eastern Europe c/	378	8.6	6.2	4.2	2.3	1 154	2 101	3 192	4 010
China	996	22.8	2.0	4.1	7.5	169	198	290	600
Developing Countries	2 230	51.0	3.3	2.4	0.1	556	763	971	980
By regions:									
North Africa	88	2.0	8.2	1.2	-0.3	590	1 284	1 438	1 400
Sub-Saharan Africa	364	8.3	1.8	-0.4	-2.6	514	606	580	440
Western Asia	88	2.0	4.1	1.0	-4.3	2 478	3 700	4 180	2 730
South and East Asia	1 262	28.9	2.6	4.1	3.7	228	293	435	620
Latin America and the Caribbean	361	8.3	2.7	2.4	-1.1	1 409	1 831	2 320	2 090
Mediterranean	68	1.6	3.7	3.7	1.1	924	1 322	1 936	2 160
Least Developed Countries	312	7.1	1.1	-0.2	-0.3	227	254	249	241

Source: "Overall Socio-economic Perspective of the World Economy to the Year 2000", United Nations, New York, 1990.

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a/ At 1980 dollars and exchange rates.

b/ Excludes a number of countries and territories, with a combined population of 79 million in 1980, for which income data are not available.

c/ Based on net material product (NMP)

environmental degradation was felt through a squeeze on public spending and both public and private investment. The impact on real growth is reflected in the growth and of poverty and unemployment in these countries. The pressure on public resources lead to curtailment of very necessary expenditures on resource management, environmental protection, health and education since these are the sectors most dependent on an adequate flow of resources into the public exchequer. The balance of payments pressures arising from the debt burden and adverse terms of trade when combined with the dependence on primary commodities in many of these countries could have led to some strains on the natural resource base of these countries.

17. The transition to sustainable development is difficult to pursue in a context where national income is declining, investible resources are reduced and the terms of trade are moving in an adverse direction. Hence, international initiatives for arresting the reverse transfer of resources, providing external assistance, and structuring technical co-operation to build human and national capabilities will be required. Along with this, it is necessary to have a national policy framework that ensures macro-economic stability, promotes efficiency in the use of resources and reduces the vulnerability to internal and external stress. These issues while not discussed here cannot be lost sight of as they are important in the whole context of development, especially poverty alleviation and human development.

The Demographic Dimension

18. Two aspects of demographic pressures are frequently emphasized in the literature: one is that of size and the other is that of the rate of growth. The link between the size of the population and poverty is more ambiguous as relatively sparsely populated countries are often poorer than more densely populated ones and the difference cannot be fully explained by the differences in resource endowments. The effect of high rates of population growth on poverty and environmental deterioration is less ambiguous. High rates of population growth reduce the savings and investment capacity of an economy, increase requirements of public funds for social infrastructure and reduce the time available for adjusting settlement patterns and natural resource use, even when these are available in abundance, to higher levels of population size. All this puts pressure on the adaptive capacities of the socio-economic system and leads often to unsustainable pressures on land, forests and water bodies and to deteriorating environmental conditions in settlements. 8/

19. At the conceptual level, under conditions of extreme poverty, specially rural poverty, for individual families more children could imply an access to higher income levels. At a relatively early age children contribute to the family's income stream by looking after animals, collecting firewood, and even working as field hands. In this way, under conditions of extreme poverty the private marginal cost of having an extra child may be lower than the marginal return from that child. Yet, the converse may apply as well - more children implying a greater prevalence of poverty. While empirical studies do not clearly establish cause and effect, we do know that whereas, on average, 15-30 per cent of families in developing countries, as a whole, have eight or more members, the proportion of poor families with that many members is 55-80 per cent. Poorest communities, therefore, tend to have relatively high dependency ratios, with considerable pressure on economically-active members to provide income and food security. Another link between poverty and high

population growth rates could be affected through poverty-induced lower education of women, high infant mortality and the consequent higher fertility and population growth rate.

20. The effect of higher population density or sheer numbers is more obvious in an urban context. The structural changes involved in the process of economic growth implies that urban populations typically grow more rapidly than rural populations as part of their growth comprises migration from the rural areas. Environmental degradation in rural areas could force higher levels of migration to urban areas and thereby exacerbate urban stress. 9/ The crowding of urban areas presents the most visible and immediate evidence of the pressure which population growth imposes on the environment. Urban living requires substantially higher per capita expenditures on the provision of water, waste disposal, and transport than in rural areas. The rapid growth in population stretches the existing public health and sanitation facilities beyond its capacity resulting in urban pollution and diseases on a large scale.

21. Another obvious manifestation of the pressure which the size of the population imposes on poverty and the environment can be felt through the degradation and depletion of water resources. In many developing countries, overuse of both surface and ground water resources is leading to scarcity and deteriorating quality of water. In coastal areas, rising demands cause people to overdraw aquifers, which can cause salinization of the shallow ground water on which many people depend. The depletion and overfishing of rural ponds and tanks perhaps because of population pressures would also affect both the environment and the poverty of rural communities. Lack of safe drinking water continues to be a serious public health problem as witnessed by millions of children who die annually from diarrheal and other sanitation-related diseases.

22. In the rural areas where most of the poor live, rural population growth leads to fragmentation of holdings, intensification of land use, reduction in fallow periods and the extension of cultivation to marginal lands. This may take the form of a shift towards previously unoccupied land, or to previously forested areas either in the wake of logging operations or directly after clearing by prospective farmers. Even within agriculture, some lands may be farmed more intensively increasingly with the aid of irrigation, while other land may be switched from subsistence to cash crops, which require higher chemical and energy inputs, perhaps leading to soil degradation. 10/ The problems of waterlogging and salinity often follow from irrigation schemes that are poorly designed and badly maintained. A counter argument suggests that intensification, by raising the per hectare productivity of existing crop land, can have positive environmental consequences by restricting the need to expand cultivation into marginal lands.

23. Pasture and rangeland degradation, along with erosion or deforestation, may occur because human and livestock pressures approach or even exceed the carrying capacities of rangelands. 11/ The increased demand for fuelwood caused by both poverty and rapid population growth has been identified as one of the major causes of deforestation in the more arid and high altitude regions where wood grows relatively slowly. 12/ As sustainable production falls, people must cut further into the tree stock in order to meet their fuelwood needs.

Access to Means of Livelihood

24. Unequal access to natural resources, for instance cultivable land, can lead to the cultivation of marginal lands and hilly tracts. Thus the question of access to means of livelihood may also have an important impact on the environment and to a large extent explain why families living in extreme poverty may prefer to have larger families. The social cost of a large and growing impoverished population is too high in terms of low productivities perpetuated by the malnourishment and the poor health of women and children, and thus to some extent the key to the population issue is also equity in the distribution of the means of production as well as equal access to other complementary inputs in production.

25. Additionally women often have limited access to assets and employment opportunities, and institutions which provide credit and disseminate information on technology may discriminate against women. This may block the access of women-headed households to any form of agricultural credit or to agricultural technology and may impel such households to cultivate marginal lands.

26. Landslessness is perhaps the most common and the obvious source of loss of access to a means of livelihood for the rural population in the third world. Further, the commercialization and/or privatization of common lands may extend to forests or grazing lands, and even water resources leading to further loss of access to water resources or forest resources which may form an integral part of the means of survival for the poor. Throughout history the poor have depended on commons to gather food, firewood, fish, game and other resources and traditional management régimes have frequently protected them from overuse. However, these régimes are breaking down and the deterioration of commons through overuse has eroded the means of sustenance of the poor who depend on them.

27. The problem of landlessness is further compounded by a less than commensurate increase in employment in the non-agricultural sector. Not all displaced peasantry are able to find non-agricultural employment, and thus small farmers may colonize the hinterland. This has been manifested in the colonization of humid lowlands, steep hillsides and other fragile hinterlands in Asia, Africa and Latin America. 13/ It has also been observed that agricultural colonization of hinterlands is a consequence of the fact that large farmers are able to influence the market and the tenurial environment. 14/

28. The tenurial rights conferred on people in the rural areas may in turn lead to environmental degradation. For example, when a farmer has a limited tenure on the land that he tills, he faces the risk of future dispossession, and may tend to disregard the benefits of soil conservation which may be realized only after the passage of several years. In many tenure régimes individuals only hold use rights on the land, and may be entitled to exclude other uses only as long as they can employ the parcel in a particular way. Thus, any user will place little weight on the benefits of conservation (such as better forest management or delayed forestation) if adopting it jeopardizes his tenure or decreases his profits in the duration of his tenure. 15/

29. Small producers may find it difficult to obtain credit at competitive rates and thus be discouraged from making near-term sacrifices for long-term gains. Thus, they may end up mining land intensively or over-exploiting other

natural resources and may not adopt conservation practices. The markets for crops and livestock may also be imperfect so that small farmers may be forced to accept low prices for their crops and livestock. Thus, reduced market access may discourage small farmers from investing in natural resource inputs to agriculture, particularly in applying conservation measures. In the same way that this phenomenon manifests itself in local or national markets unequal access to international markets can also lead to the deterioration of the environment.

30. The poor typically live in remote locations with little access to infrastucture and transport. 16/ Many of them live in remote areas from and to which the costs of transport links with markets are high. This limits the options available for sustainable resources use particularly to the poor. The lack of access to technology further condemns the poor to low levels of productivity. Agricultural extension services and even research have been biased against marginal areas thus perpetuating the existing low levels of productivity.

31. The various forms of environmental degradation have different links with poverty and an analysis which differentiates between these categories would be useful in identifying the specific policy measures required to mitigate the harmful effects of poverty related environmental problems. Policy measures must thus take account of the links, the regional diversities and elucidate the global responsibilities for alleviating poverty along with safeguarding the environment.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

32. An environmental policy that focuses mainly on the conservation and protection of resources without regard to the livelihoods of those who depend on that resource for a living will impact adversely on poverty. Equally, development policy which focuses mainly on increasing the production of goods without concerning itself with the long-term potential of the resources on which production is based will sooner or later run into problems of declining productivity which also will impact adversely on poverty. An effective strategy to tackle problems of poverty development and environment simultaneously in developing countries should begin with focus not on resources or on production but on people. The objective of providing sustainable livelihoods for all could provide an integrating factor which allows policies to address issues of resource management, development and poverty eradication simultaneously.

33. The fact that the processes of economic growth and development may tend to leave behind certain groups in certain areas has been recognized both in national and in international policies. Recognition of this fact is reflcted in ameliorative programmes which address this problem. There are many different types of targeted poverty reduction programmes directed at specific groups of the population on specific areas. These programmes aim at one or more of the following:

1. Increasing access to productive assets through land reforms, or subsidies to acquire new assets, or ensuring traditional rights, etc.

2. Raising the productivity of productive assets through the provision of infrastructure, credit, technology and other inputs to small producers.

3. Developing human resources through health, education, technology extension, community development, etc.

4. Improving living conditions through the provision of social infrastructure particularly water supply, sanitation, housing and similar facilities.

34. Closely related to such targeted poverty reduction programmes are national and international measures of a protective nature to support consumption in periods of stress through relief programmes or through more long-term interventions directed at vulnerable groups, for example, nutrition support for women and children.

35. A closely linked set of interventions relates to special programmes directed at ecologically disadvantaged areas, like desert areas, drought prone areas, hilly areas, salinity-affected areas, flood-prone areas, etc. As stated earlier, a significant part of the population below the poverty line tend to live in such areas. However, these programmes often are of a somewhat technological nature addressing the specific resource management issues.

36. Targeted poverty reduction programmes, as also the special area development programmes, are often add-ons to normal development strategies. The need to provide a livelihood base to the poor and to protect the resource base in ecologically disadvantaged areas is often not integrated into the mainstream of development strategy. The productive potential represented by these people and by these areas is not taken into account in framing economy wide targets for production investment, etc. In a sense, what is reflected in these programmes is a welfare approach rather than a developmental approach. 17/

37. The promotion of sustainable livelihoods has to become a part of the mainstream of growth and development strategy. The target group orientation of anti-poverty programmes and the resource management dimensions of area development programmes must be combined into an integrated programme that simultaneously addresses both sets of issues. The objectives of such an integrated programme would be:

1. The generation of remunerative employment and productive occupational opportunities (farm and non-farm) on a scale sufficient to take care of prospective increases in the labour force and to cover backlogs from the past;

2. The development of infrastructure, marketing systems, technology systems, credit systems, etc., to support this as also to ensure a widening of options for resource poor households;

3. Substantial increases in resource productivity and measures to ensure that the local population benefits in adequate measure from resource use;

4. Rehabilitation of degraded resources and policy measures to prevent unsustainable resource use;

5. Development of mechanisms for public participation, particularly by poor households, to ensure sustainable development.

38. An integrated programme to promote sustainable livelihoods is likely to differ greatly from region to region depending on the nature of the resources available, the size of population and the rate at which it is growing, the options available for economic diversification, the social and cultural attitudes of the local people and many other factors. Hence decentralization of authority and responsibility for planning, promotion and programme management may well be central to the effectiveness of such programmes. Empowerment of local communities so that they have effective control over local resources, particularly common property resources, may also play an important role. This would also help to ensure local adaptation of new technologies, the fuller utilization of local knowledge of plant varieties, characteristics of waterbodies, etc. But at the same time, the effectiveness of such a programme would also depend on the extent to which the policy framework at the national level and the international environment help or hinder sustainable resource use at the local level.

39. The need for local specificity is particularly marked in the case of peoples who inhabit certain remote and ecologically fragile regions like the polar regions, the tropical rainforests, the high mountains, arid deserts and similar areas. These people often have a sense of ethnic and cultural separateness. They have an activity base which is very different from the rest of the population. Often they are pastoralists or nomads, or hunter gatherers or practice a method of agriculture which is very different from what would be considered modern practice. Sustainable development for such communities requires respect for their cultural traditions, for their local knowledge and their skill in adapting to an often hostile and fragile environment. Protecting the resources on which they depend for their livelihood and ensuring access should have the highest priority in any programme of development. The interaction of these communities with "the modern sector" can seriously weaken and disrupt them if it intrudes too much into their traditional ways of life or habitats. In the long run the future of these communities is best protected by widening the options available to them in a rapidly changing world.

40. The importance of widening options can be seen more sharply in certain areas where farmers have taken to the illegal cultivation of narcotic substances. In the nature of things these areas are generally remote from centres of administration and transport since such activities thrive best when surveillance is difficult. The direct environment consequences of such activities are of course not very well known. However, since many of these centres are in ecologically fragile regions, a widenig of options for sustainable production in resource-poor areas may well help in reducing the pressures for such illicit cultivation of narcotics.

41. In a certain sense the promotion of sustainable livelihoods in the sense described above has to be reflected not just in separate programmes but in the way in which sectoral programmes and policies are organized in agriculture, forestry, fisheries, mining, industry, energy, transport, etc. The ultimate aim must be to reflect this objective of sustainable livelihoods in all developmental activities at the national and international level.

FURTHER PROGRAMME OF WORK

42. The analysis presented in the previous section is preliminary in nature. It focuses on the factors underlying poverty and environmental degradation. It is equally important to study successful instances where these two problems have been tackled together.

43. The analysis presented above has been discussed with concerned agencies in the United Nations system and a further programme of work identified in order to refine the analysis and develop proposals for consideration by the Preparatory Committee. Specific issues which are being examined by the different agencies are given below:

World Bank:	An evaluation of anti-poverty programmes focusing on resource-management issues.
FAO:	Impact of low and high agricultural productivity on environmental degradation.
IFAD	The links between rural poverty and environmental degradation and food security.
ILO	The role of employment in promoting sustainable development.
WMO:	Links between health indicators, with a particular focus on women and children, and poverty and environmental degradation.
UNDP:	The views of field-oriented NGO's on the issue of poverty, environmental degradation and development.
UNFPA:	Demographic developments, poverty and environment.
UNICEF:	The impact of environmental stress on children.

44. In addition, the Swedish International Development Agency will develop further its study on the interrelationship between Poverty, Environment and Development as also a more specific consideration of the linkages of these issues with the question of freshwater availability. In the section that follows the Secretariat is placing before the Preparatory Committee some issues relating to some potential areas for action so as to provide further guidance to the Secretariat in its work.

POTENTIAL AREAS FOR ACTION: SOME ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

45. The links between poverty and environmental degradation are complex and any comprehensive effort at addressing the problem would have to deal with the entire range of both national and international development policy. In particular, at the international level, the issue of the flow of resources and technologies for accelerating growth and promoting sustainable development as also issues of market access and trade barriers would be relevant. At the national level, the investments in physical infrastructure, promotion of technological innovation, public policies that stimulate efficiency in resource use, equity and access to resources and to opportunities of

development within the country are matters that would require attention. In a sense, sustainable development requires a change in development policies both internationally and nationally. Subject to this qualification the Preparatory Committee may wish to discuss the programmatic interventions required for the promotion of sustainable livelihoods, particularly in the areas subject to ecological stress. In this context, the Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following issues:

1. What should be the time-frame for the objective of sustainable livelihoods for all at the national and international level?

2. As a first step would it be worth promoting specific sustainable development projects on a sufficiently wide-spread basis to have a significant impact both on the poverty and on environmental degradation? What are the priority areas for such projects?

3. Can such projects be seen as a further development of existing anti-poverty projects and area development projects?

4. How should national targets and priorities for the areas covered by such for the sustainable development projects be framed?

5. Would it be possible for bilateral and multilateral donors to accept the commitment to provide additional financial and technical assistance to developing countries for such sustainable development projects? What would be the mechanism through which such assistance would be best channelled?

46. The analysis presented earlier has brought out some of the dimensions of the links between demographic pressures, poverty and environmental degradation. The International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade recognizes that demograpic situation varies among countries but in most developing countries a lowering of the rate of population growth will relieve the strains on the social situation, economic growth, the environment and the use of natural resources. The Preparatory Committee may wish to consider the following issues:

1. Would a lowering of the population growth rate help to address more effectively the problems of poverty and environmental degradation particularly in areas subject to ecological stress?

2. Over half of the developing countries are pursuing active policies to reduce the rate of population growth. What are the lessons that can be learned from this experience so that the ingredients of an effective policy are better identified?

3. The status of women, their access to education and employment, as also improvements in their access to health care and to family planning services, have proved to be effective and successful instruments of population programmes in many countries. What are the specific programmatic measures which can be taken to strengthen this type of approach? Should assistance to developing countries in the area of population be substantially increased?

47. Improving the access of the rural and urban poor to health care, education, safe drinking water, sanitation and housing are important in

reducing deprivation. The Preparatory Committee may wish to discuss these programmatic dimensions as part of its discussions on health, human settlements, freshwater and waste management.

48. Finally, programmatic interventions which address the Poverty - Environment link must be co-ordinated with programmes which address issues like land degradation, deforestation, scarcity of freshwater, depletion of fishery resources, etc. The Preparatory Committee may wish to discuss the institutional mechanisms required at local, national and international level to secure this co-ordination.

Notes

1/ "World Development Report", 1990, The World Bank. "Human Development Report", 1990, UNDP.

2/ "World Development Report", 1990.

3/ "Our Common Future", Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, Oxford, 1987.

4/ "Overall Social Economic Perspective of the World Economy to the year 2000", United Nations, New York, 1990.

5/ "Development and International Economic Co-operation, Net Transfer of Transfer of Resources from Developing Countries: Report of the Secretary-General", General Assembly A/45/487, United Nations, October 1990.

6/ Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, based on data of the IMF, the World Bank and the United Nations Statistical Office.

7/ See World Bank, World Development Report, 1990, p. 107.

8/ See Keyfitz, N., 1989 "Population growth can prevent development that would slow population growth" in Mathews, Jessica (ed.) "Preserving the Global Environment", WW Norton and Co., New York, 1991.

9/ Migration from rural to other rural areas could also increase because of environmental stress so that the poverty-environmental deterioration link spills from one area to another.

10/ It has been contended that cash crops deplete the soil of its nutrients, whereas subsistence crops, particularly legumes may replenish the soil nutrients. But the argument cannot be generalized. Subsistence crops that are not grown in leguminous rotation can "mine" soils. Also, there are marginal areas where perennials or non-food crops are often better adapted to the enviroment than subsistence crops.

11/ This, however, is not a static limit and carrying capacity can be raised through proper resource management.

Notes (continued)

12/ See Poore, D., 1983 Deforestation and the population factor, IUCN Bulletin 14, (1/2/3):26.

13/ See Southgate, D., 1988, The Economics of Land Degradation in the Third World. Environmental Department Working Paper No.2., The World Bank.

14/ See Blaikie, P., 1985, The Political Economy of soil erosion in developing countries, London: Longman group.

15/ Southgate D., and D. Pearce, 1987, "Natural resource degradation under agricultural colonization: a casual analysis", (discussion paper), Department of Economics, University College, London, 1987.

16/ Mellor, J.M., 1988, "The Intertwining of Environmental Problems and Poverty", in Environment, November 1988.

17/ There are exceptions to this both at the national and international level, e.g., at the international level IFAD is evolving approaches to Environmentally Sustainable Rural Poverty Alleviation.